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# MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT.

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To the Congress of the Confederate States of America:

Gentlemen,

My Message, addressed to you at the commencement of this session, contained such full information of the state of the Confederacy as to render it unnecessary that I should now do more than call your attention to such important facts as have occurred during the recess, and to matters connected with the public defence.

I have again to congratulate you on the accession of new members to our Confederation of free, equal and sovereign States. Our loved and honored brethren of North Carolina and Tennessee have consummated the action, foreseen and provided for at your last session, and I have had the gratification of announcing, by proclamation, in conformity with law, that those States were admitted into the Confederacy.

The people of Virginia also, by a majority previously unknown in her history, have ratified the action of her Convention, uniting her fortunes with ours. The States of Arkansas, North Carolina and Virginia have likewise adopted the permanent Constitution of the Confederate States, and no doubt is entertained of its adoption by Tennessee at the election to be held early next month.

I deemed it advisable to direct the removal of the several Executive Departments, with their archives, to this city, to which you had removed the seat of government, immediately after your adjournment. The aggressive movements of the enemy required prompt and energetic action. The accumulation of his forces on the Potomac sufficiently demonstrated that his efforts were to be directed against Virginia; and from no point could the ne-

cessary measures for her defence and protection be so efficiently directed as from her own capital.

The rapid progress of events for the last few weeks has fully sufficed to strip the veil behind which the true policy and purposes of the Government of the United States had been previously concealed; their odious features now stand fully revealed: the message of their President and the action of their Congress during the present month, confess the intention of subjugating these States by a war, whose folly is equaled by its wickedness: a war by which it is impossible to attain the proposed result, whilst its dire calamities, not to be avoided by us, will fall with double severity on themselves.

Commencing in March last, with an affectation of ignoring the secession of the seven States which first organized this government: persisting in April in the idle and absurd assumption of the existence of a riot which was to be dispersed by a *posse comitatus:* continuing in successive months the false representation that these States intended offensive war, in spite of the conclusive evidence to the contrary, furnished as well by official action, as by the very basis on which this government is constituted: the President of the United States and his advisers succeeded in deceiving the people of those States into the belief that the purpose of this government was not peace at home, but conquest abroad: not the defence of its own liberties, but the subversion of those of the people of the United States.

The series of manœuvres by which this impression was created: the art with which they were devised, and the perfidy with which they were executed, were already known to you; but you could scarcely have supposed that they would be openly avowed, and their success made the subject of boast and self-laudation in an executive message. Fortunately for the truth of history, however, the President of the United States details with minuteness the attempt to reinforce Fort Pickens, in violation of an armistice of which he confesses to have been informed, but "only by rumors too vague and uncertain to fix attention:" the hostile expedition dispatched to supply Fort Sumpter, admitted to have been undertaken with a knowledge that its success was impossible: the sending of notice to the Governor of South Carolina of

his intention to use force to accomplish his object: and then quoting from his Inaugural Address the assurance that there could be no conflict, unless these States were the aggressors, he proceeds to declare that his conduct, as just related by himself, was a performance of this promise, "so free from the power of ingenious sophistry as that the world should not be able to misunderstand it:" and in defiance of his own statement that he gave notice of the approach of a hostile fleet, he charges these States with becoming the assailants of the United States, "without a gun in sight or *in expectancy* to return their fire, save only the few in the fort." He is indeed fully justified in saying that the case "is so free from the power of ingenious sophistry, that the world will not be able to misunderstand it."

Under cover of this unfounded pretence that the Confederate States are the assailants, that high functionary, after expressing his concern that some foreign nations "had so shaped their action as if they supposed the early destruction of our National Union was probable," abandons all further disguise, and proposes "to make this contest a short and a decisive one," by placing at the control of the government for the work, *at least* 400,000 men, and $400,000,000. The Congress, concurring in the doubt thus intimated as to the sufficiency of the force demanded, has increased it to half a million of men. These enormous preparations in men and money, for the conduct of a war on a scale more gigantic than any which the new world has ever witnessed, is a distinct avowal, in the eyes of civilized man, that the United States are engaged in a conflict with a great and powerful nation: they are at last compelled to abandon the pretence of being engaged in dispersing rioters and suppressing insurrections; and are driven to the acknowledgment that the ancient Union has been dissolved. They recognize the separate existence of these Confederate States, by the interdiction, embargo and blockade of all commerce between them and the United States, not only by sea, but by land: not only in ships, but in rail cars: not only with those who bear arms, but with the entire population of the Confederate States. Finally, they have repudiated the foolish conceit that the inhabitants of this Confederacy are still citizens of the United States, for

they are waging an indiscriminate war upon them all, with a savage ferocity unknown to modern civilization. In this war, rapine is the rule: private residences, in peaceful rural retreats, are bombarded and burnt: grain crops in the field are consumed by the torch: and when the torch is not convenient, careful labor is bestowed to render complete the destruction of every article of use or ornament remaining in private dwellings, after their inhabitants have fled from the outrages of a brutal soldiery.

In 1781, Great Britain, when invading her revolted Colonies, took possession of the very district of country near Fortress Monroe now occupied by troops of the United States. The houses then inhabited by the people, after being respected and protected by avowed invaders, are now pillaged and destroyed by men who pretend that the victims are their fellow-citizens.

Mankind will shudder to hear of the tales of outrages committed on defenceless females by soldiers of the United States now invading our homes: yet these outrages are prompted by inflamed passions and the madness of intoxication. But who shall depict the horror with which it will regard the cool and deliberate malignity which, under pretext of suppressing an insurrection, said by themselves to be upheld by a minority only of our people, makes special war on the sick, including the women and the children, by carefully devised measures to prevent their obtaining the medicines necessary for their cure. The sacred claims of humanity, respected even during the fury of actual battle, by careful diversion of attack from the hospitals containing wounded enemies, are outraged in cold blood, by a government and people that pretend to desire a continuance of fraternal connexions.

All these outrages must remain unavenged, save by the universal reprobation of mankind, in all cases where the actual perpetrators of the wrongs escape capture. They admit of no retaliation. The humanity of our people would shrink instinctively from the bare idea of waging a like war upon the sick, the women and the children of the enemy.

But there are other savage practices which have been resorted to by the Government of the United States, which do admit of repression by retaliation. I have been

driven to the necessity of enforcing this repression. The prisoners of war taken by the enemy on board the armed schooner Savannah, sailing under our commission, were, as I was credibly advised, treated like common felons: put in irons: confined in a jail usually appropriated to criminals of the worst dye, and threatened with punishment as such. I had made an application for the exchange of these prisoners, to the commanding officer of the enemy's squadron off Charleston harbor, but that officer had already sent the prisoners to New York when the application was made. I therefore deemed it my duty to renew the proposal for the exchange, to the constitutional Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, the only officer having control of the prisoners. To this end I dispatched an officer to him, under a flag of truce; and in making the proposal, I informed President Lincoln of my resolute purpose to check all barbarities on prisoners of war, by such severity of retaliation on the prisoners held by us as should secure the abandonment of the practice.

This communication was received and read by the officer in command of the Army of the United States, and a message was brought from him, by the bearer of my communication, that a reply would be returned by President Lincoln as soon as possible. I earnestly hope that this promised reply, which has not yet been received, will convey the assurance that prisoners of war will be treated, in this unhappy contest, with that regard to humanity which has made such conspicuous progress in the conduct of modern warfare. As a measure of precaution, however, and until the promised reply is received, I still retain in close custody some officers captured from the enemy, whom it had been my pleasure previously to enlarge on parole, and whose fate must necessarily depend on that of the prisoners held by the enemy.

I append a copy of my communication to the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the report of the officer charged to deliver it, marked Doc. A.

There are some other passages in the remarkable paper to which I have directed your attention, having reference to the peculiar relations which exist between this government and the States usually termed the border slave States, which cannot properly be withheld from notice.

The hearts of our people are animated by sentiments towards the inhabitants of those States, which found expression in your enactment refusing to consider them as enemies, or to authorize hostilities against them. That a very large portion of the people of those States regard us as brethren; that if unrestrained by the actual presence of large armies, the subversion of civil authority and the declaration of martial law, some of them at least would joyfully unite with us; that they are with almost entire unanimity opposed to the prosecution of the war waged against us; are facts of which daily recurring events fully warrant the assertion.

The President of the United States refuses to recognize in these, our late sister States, the right of refraining from attack on us: and justifies his refusal by the assertion that the States have no other power "than that reserved to them in the Union by the Constitution, *no one of them having ever been a State out of the Union.*"

This view of the constitutional relations between the States and the General Government, is a fitting introduction to another assertion of the Message, that the Executive possesses the power of suspending the writ of *habeas corpus*, and of delegating that power to military commanders, at his discretion: and both these propositions claim a respect equal to that which is felt for the additional statement of opinion in the same paper, that it is proper, in order to execute the laws, that "some single law, made in such extreme tenderness of the citizens' liberty, that practically it relieves more of the guilty than the innocent, should, to a very limited extent, be violated."

We may well rejoice that we have forever severed our connection with a government that thus tramples on all the principles of constitutional liberty, and with a people in whose presence such avowals could be hazarded.

The operations in the field will be greatly extended by reason of the policy which, heretofore secretly entertained, is now avowed and acted on by the United States. The forces hitherto raised proved ample for the defence of the seven States which originally organized the Confederacy, as is evinced by the fact, that with the exception of three fortified islands, whose defence is efficiently aided by a preponderating naval force, the enemy has

been driven completely out of those States; and now, at the expiration of five months from the formation of the government, not a single hostile foot presses their soil. Those forces, however, must necessarily prove inadequate to repel the invasion by half a million of men, now proposed by the enemy; and a corresponding increase in our forces will become necessary. The recommendations for the raising and efficient equipment of this additional force, will be contained in the communication of the Secretary of War, to which I need scarcely invite your earnest attention.

In my Message delivered in April last, I referred to the promise of abundant crops, with which we were cheered. The grain crops, generally, have since been harvested, and the yield has proven to be the most abundant known in our history. Many believe the supply adequate to two years' consumption of our population. Cotton, sugar and tobacco, forming the surplus production of our agriculture, and furnishing the basis of our commercial interchanges, present the most cheering promise; and a kind Providence has smiled on the labor which extracts the teeming wealth of our soil in all portions of our Confederacy.

It is the more gratifying to be able to give you this assurance, because of the need of a large and increased expenditure in the support of our army. Elevated and purified by the sacred cause they maintain, our fellow-citizens of every condition of life exhibit the most self-sacrificing devotion: They manifest a laudable pride in upholding their independence, unaided by any resources other than their own: and the immense wealth which a fertile soil and genial climate have accumulated in this confederacy of agriculturists, could not be more strikingly displayed than in the large revenues which, with eager zeal, they have contributed, at the call of their country. In the single article of cotton, the subscription to the loan proposed by the government cannot fall short of fifty millions of dollars, and will probably largely exceed that sum: and scarcely an article required for the consumption of the army is provided otherwise than by subscription to the produce loan so happily devised by your wisdom. The Secretary of the Treasury, in the report submitted to you by him, will give you the amplest details connected with that branch of the public service.

But it is not alone in their prompt pecuniary contributions that the noble race of freemen who inhabit these States evince how worthy they are of the liberties which they so well know how to defend. In numbers far exceeding those authorized by your laws, they have pressed the tender of their services against the enemy. Their attitude of calm and sublime devotion to their country; the cool and confident courage with which they are already preparing to meet the threatened invasion in whatever proportions it may assume; the assurance that their sacrifices and their services will be renewed from year to year with unfaltering purpose, until they have made good to the uttermost, their right to self-government; the generous and almost unquestioning confidence which they display in their government during the pending struggle; all combine to present a spectacle such as the world has rarely, if ever, seen.

To speak of subjugating such a people, so united and determined, is to speak a language incomprehensible to them. To resist attacks on their rights or their liberties is with them an instinct. Whether this war shall last one, or three, or five years, is a problem they leave to be solved by the enemy alone; it will last till the enemy shall have withdrawn from their borders—till their political rights, their altars and their homes are freed from invasion. Then and then only will they rest from this struggle, to enjoy in peace the blessings which with the favor of Providence they have secured by the aid of their own strong hearts and sturdy arms.

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

*Richmond*, July 20, 1861.

# DOCUMENT A.

RICHMOND, 6th July 1861.

*To* ABRAHAM LINCOLN, *President, and*
*Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the U. S.*

SIR,

Having learned that the schooner Savannah, a private armed vessel in the service and sailing under a commission issued by authority of the Confederate States of America, had been captured by one of the vessels forming the blockading squadron off Charleston harbor, I directed a proposition to be made to the officer commanding that squadron for an exchange of the officers and crew of the Savannah for prisoners of war held by this government "according to number and rank." To this proposition, made on the 19th ult., Capt. Mercer, the officer in command of the blockading squadron, made answer on the same day that "the prisoners (referred to) are not on board of any of the vessels under my command."

It now appears, by statements made without contradiction in newspapers published in New York, that the prisoners above mentioned were conveyed to that city, and have there been treated not as prisoners of war, but as criminals: that they have been put in irons, confined in jail, brought before the courts of justice on charges of piracy and treason, and it is even rumored that they have been actually convicted of the offences charged, for no other reason than that they bore arms in defence of the

rights of this government and under the authority of its commission.

I could not without grave discourtesy have made the newspaper statements above referred to, the subject of this communication, if the threat of treating as pirates the citizens of this Confederacy, armed for its service on the high seas, had not been contained in your proclamation of the —— April last. That proclamation, however, seems to afford a sufficient justification for considering these published statements as not devoid of probability.

It is the desire of this government so to conduct the war now existing as to mitigate its horrors as far as may be possible: and, with this intent, its treatment of the prisoners captured by its forces has been marked by the greatest humanity and leniency consistent with public obligation: some have been permitted to return home on parole, others to remain at large under similar condition within this Confederacy, and all have been furnished with rations for their subsistence, such as are allowed to our own troops. It is only since the news has been received of the treatment of the prisoners taken on the Savannah, that I have been compelled to withdraw these indulgencies and to hold the prisoners taken by us in strict confinement.

A just regard to humanity and to the honor of this government now requires me to state explicitly, that painful as will be the necessity, this government will deal out to the prisoners held by it, the same treatment and the same fate as shall be experienced by those captured on the Savannah; and if driven to the terrible necessity of retaliation by your execution of any of the officers or crew of the Savannah, that retaliation will be extended so far as shall be requisite to secure the abandonment of a practice unknown to the warfare of civilized man; and so barbarous as to disgrace the nation which shall be guilty of inaugurating it.

With this view, and because it may not have reached you, I now renew the proposition made to the commander of the blockading squadron, to exchange for the prisoners taken on the Savannah, an equal number of those now held by us, according to rank.

I am, sir, yours, &c.

JEFFERSON DAVIS, *President,*
*and Commander in Chief of the Army and*
*Navy of the Confederate States.*

[ Copy. ]

Richmond, July 10th, 1861.

*To His Excellency* Jefferson Davis,
*President of the Confederate States.*

Sir,

In obedience to your instructions, I left the city of Richmond on the morning of the 7th of July at 6 o'clock A. M., as bearer of dispatches to His Excellency Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States. At Manassas I received from General Beauregard a letter to General McDowell, commanding the U. S. forces at Arlington. From Manassas I proceeded to Fairfax court-house, where I was furnished by General Bonham, an escort of fourteen cavalry under the command of Lieut. Breckenridge of the Virginia cavalry. Proceeding on the direct road to Alexandria to its junction with the road to Arlington, I met a detachment of cavalry under the command of Col. Porter, U. S. A., about three miles from the junction; from which place I sent back my escort. Capt. Whipple, U. S. A., accompanied me to Arlington, where I arrived about 4 o'clock P. M., Monday the 8th. Gen. McDowell not being at Arlington, my arrival was telegraphed him to Washington city. About 9 o'clock P. M. Col. Van Renslaer, senior aid-de-camp to General Scott, was sent to convey me to General Scott's headquarters—where I found General McDowell, to whom I delivered General Beauregard's letter. After reading Gen. B.'s letter, he passed it to General Scott, who being informed in this letter, that I desired to deliver your communication in person, received it of me. After reading your communication to Mr. Lincoln, Gen. Scott informed me that

a reply would be returned by Mr. Lincoln as soon as possible—and at the same time instructed me to return to Arlington with Gen. McDowell, thence to proceed in the morning back to our lines, which I did, under an escort of twenty U. S. cavalry, commanded by Lieut. Putnam. In my intercourse with Gen. Scott and the other officers of the U. S. army, I have to say, that I was received with marked consideration and attention, and with that courtesy and kindness which should ever characterize the diplomatic relations of great nations, in war as well as in peace. Understanding that the object of my mission was the delivery of your letter to Mr. Lincoln, I have the honor to state that it was done, and subscribe myself

Your obedient servant,

THOS. H. TAYLOR,
*Capt. Cavalry C. S. A.*
*And Lt. Col. 2nd Ky. Regiment.*

RITCHIE & DUNNAVANT, PRINTERS.